

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

TITLE: Police, Prisons, & the Justice of God

TERM: Spring 2020-2021

PROFESSOR: Derek Woodard-Lehman

CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: _____
AUDITORS: 5

UNLIMITED X
NO AUDITORS _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

One of the most pressing issues in contemporary US American public policy and public theology is policing and imprisonment. Some are convinced that “law and order” must be maintained at all costs. Others are convinced that this same law and order constitute a “criminal *injustice* system” that is nothing other than a “new Jim Crow.” This course engages these debates, examines them in historical and social context, and elaborates a theological response rooted in the resources of Christian dogmatics, ethics, and politics—especially as expressed in global Reformed traditions of resistance to domination.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be conversant with biblical and theological principles for public theology; especially Reformed Christian conceptions of state and society, law and order, public justice and the common good, just war and political violence
- Students will be able to articulate the history and theology of Reformed Christian social criticism, civil disobedience, and political resistance; especially the European Reformations (Swiss, Dutch, English), the German Confessing Church, and the South African Confessing Church
- Students will be able to interpret scripture in order to construct norms, principles, and ideals for criminal justice within their own congregational and community contexts
- Students will be able to articulate how the words and work of past generations provide inspiration and instruction for present public witness and contemporary social ministry
- Students will be conversant with history, philosophy, and sociology of modern US American criminal justice
- Students will be familiar with the language and format of court decisions, public policy, and statistical data reporting
- Students will be able to articulate the place of public witness and social ministry within their vocational identity

PREREQUISITES: None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/READING:

Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. **1620971933 (\$13.23)**
 Heather MacDonald. *The War on Cops: How the New Attack on Law & Order Makes Everyone Less Safe*. **1594039682 (\$15.99)**
 Naomi Murakawa. *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America*. **0199892806 (\$33.95)**
 John Pffaf. *Locked in: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform*. **0465096913 (\$25.49)**
 Patrick Sharkey. *Uneasy Peace: The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life, and the Next War on Violence*. **039335654X (\$15.99)**
 Franklin Zimring. *The City That Became Safe: New York’s Lessons for Urban Crime & Its Control*. **0199324166 (\$21.46)**

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

- Attendance and prepared participation
- Initiation and facilitation of one Roundtable discussion focused on the texts and themes for that week
- Two short (2,000-2,5000 word) essays
- A Final Project that may take the form a traditional term paper (7,500 words) or a creative project

ATTENDANCE: Required